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ABSTRACT

This theme issue of "The Goldfinch" presents the story of Iowans at work beginning with the Ioway Indians before 1830 through the Great Depression of the 1930s. One article looks at how children worked to help their families buy food and clothing. Organized labor helped all workers in Iowa by providing better working conditions. Women in Iowa's workforce demonstrates how hard women worked in factories and also worked raising families. The Great Depression hurt many Iowa farmers because they were not able to pay back their bank loans. Stories from children currently living in Iowa and examples of the kind of work they do today conclude this issue. (JAG)

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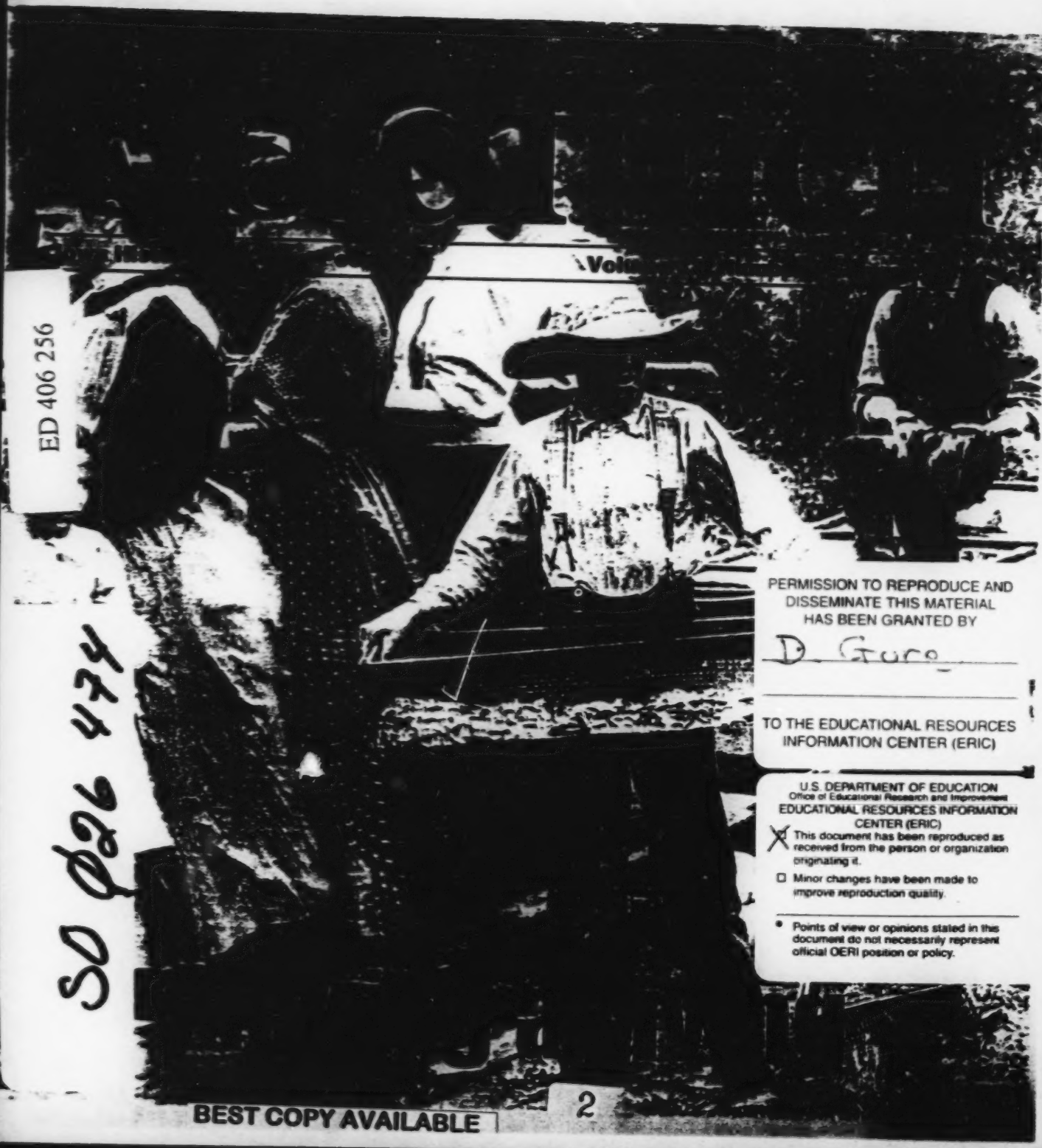

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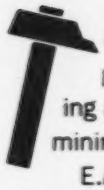
Iowans at work

Iowans work around the clock, creating, serving, repairing, and generally taking care of business. No matter what one's job, **compensation**, or work environment, all Iowa workers contribute to the state's economy.

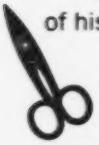


In the mid- to late-1800s, when coal mining was a major industry in Iowa, boys as young as nine labored alongside grown men in the mine shafts. Digging for coal was exhausting and dangerous work. In Iowa, one in ten miners died in mining accidents.

E.A. Carter was 11 when he first went to work in coal mines in Mahaska County. "In those years, working was ten or more hours a day," he recalled later. "We couldn't do much except work and sleep."

Work was different for middle-class men and women who owned shops or were doctors, lawyers, teachers, shop clerks, and bookkeepers.

In the early 1900s, young Charles Honce loved to sit in the back of his father's barber shop and watch him work.



"His work-week certainly totaled between 80 and 90 hours," he wrote years later. "Although a barber wasn't busy every minute of the time, he was on his feet a torturing number of hours and usually ended up with flat feet or ulcers."

Farm families also experienced different kinds of work. They labored long hours to keep their farms running smoothly. Farm kids helped with chores and housework and even in the fields.

Lizzie Fellows Heckart, a Van Buren County farm girl, remembered some of the chores that kept her busy in the 1890s. "By the time I was nine or ten, the setting of the hens and caring for them and the little chickens was my job," she said.

In this issue of *The Goldfinch* you will meet other Iowa workers throughout the state's history. You'll learn how men and women supported their families and what they did when there were no jobs to be found. Make a time card to track the work *you* do and check out our hard-at-work puzzle. It's all waiting for you in this issue! ▲

— The Editor

compensation — money earned

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THE Goldfinch
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HISTORY MYSTERY

SHSI (Iowa City)

In the 1870s, photographer J.P. Doremus photographed equipment used by workers in one of Iowa's industries.

These workers wore spiked shoes to secure themselves. They used poles to steady their cargo as they floated it down river. Spikes on the end of poles helped the workers steer. The axes were also necessities.

What was the industry that required this equipment? (Turn to page 30 for the answer.)

CONTENTS

Features

Iowans at Work	2
A State at Work	4
Working the Environment	7
Kids at Work	8
Organizing Work	10
Dear Diary	14
A Neighborhood at Work	16
Women at Work	18
Tough Times	20

Departments

History Mystery	3
Activity: Hard at Work Puzzle	13
Activity: Who Works Where?	17
Activity: Make a Time Card	23
History Makers	24
Activity: Be a Photo Historian	26
Fiction: A Job for the Summer	27
Answers	30
The Roost	31

On the Cover:

Workers at Bruce's Oriental Goldfish Fisheries sort fish, Thornburg, Iowa, around 1909. Credit: SHSI (Iowa City)

by Amy Ruth

Iowa: a state at work

Iowans of all ages have worked throughout the state's history. As industries, labor laws, and the environment have changed, Iowans have adapted their skills and talents to make a living and support their families.

The Ioway Indians (also called Iowa Indians) lived in Iowa before European-American settlers came here in the 1830s. They lived in villages along major rivers such as the Mississippi and the Missouri.

In this tribe, work was divided between clans. "Every clan, Bear or Buffalo for example, had a special job to do," said Lance Foster, a graduate student at Iowa State University and a member of the Ioway tribe. "The Bear Clan would lead people in hunts and also act as police. The Buffalo Clan tended to be farmers. Although everyone planted something, the Buffalo were the leaders."

In the Ioway tribe, specialists worked at different tasks. Some people made arrows and others made drums. "Usually you paid them in something like horses or goods," Foster said. "There wasn't any money. It was all about trade."

Women were the caretakers of families and the farmers who cultivated the fields. "They were considered the heart of the nation," Foster said. "The men were mainly for the defense of the tribe."

Children were given responsibilities when they were as young as five years old. Boys hunted birds and rabbits for food. Girls helped their mothers in the fields and learned to sew by making doll clothes. All children were made to feel good about their contributions, Foster said.

"The most respected people were the ones who worked for the good of all people," Foster told *The Goldfinch*.

Today, members of the Ioway tribe live mainly in Kansas, Nebraska, and Oklahoma. They work in a variety of jobs on and off the **reservation**, but still have responsibilities to the tribe.

"They always try to make time during pow wows, ceremonies, and funerals for traditional roles of work," Foster said. Some people cook feasts while others might be responsible for making drums or other objects.

SHSI (Iowa City)

In the Ioway tribe, work was divided between clans.

reservation — land reserved for Native Americans

New workers arrive

The United States government moved Native American tribes out of Iowa by the mid-1830s and European-American settlers moved in.

Most early industries were home-based, and revolved around agriculture. Families farmed and grew or made what they needed to survive, including most of their food, soap, candles, and clothes. Farmers traded their produce and crops for sugar, coffee, and other items they could not grow.

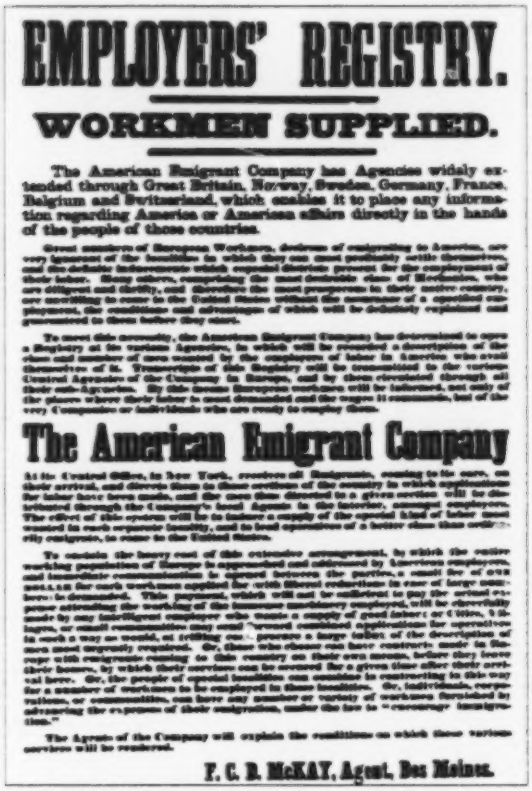
As more and more settlers came, they needed lumber for construction and fuel. The lumber industry grew quickly until forests were depleted.

As towns sprung up around the state, businesses and services grew, too. People found jobs in general stores, small workshops, saloons, and hotels. Some worked as teachers, lawyers, carpenters, doctors, blacksmiths, mill workers, hatmakers, and dressmakers.

Stores would often open as early as 6 a.m. and some days might not close until midnight. A farm family might come to town once or twice a month and would spend the entire day shopping, trading, and socializing. After 1910, the car made it easier to travel and rural families came to town more often. After 1950, the television kept people at home. Many businesses adjusted their hours to keep up with the changes brought by these inventions.

Town kids often worked in the family business after school and on Saturdays. They might sweep shop floors, run errands, and wait on customers. Farm kids also worked long hours in their parents' business — the farm. Most parents did not pay their children for work. A child's labor was often necessary to the financial well-being of the family.

In the late 1800s, farm families employed hired hands who helped in the fields or with domestic chores in exchange for wages, room, and board.



EMPLOYERS' REGISTRY.

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SHSI (Iowa City)

This 1860s poster advertises a kind of employment agency that matched immigrant workers with available jobs in Iowa and the rest of the country.

Industrialization in Iowa

After the 1870s, industries and work changed even more in Iowa. The state's expanding railway network meant more products could be transported quickly and more efficiently to other parts of the country. Refrigerated rail cars kept products from spoiling. Soon, booming businesses and major

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industries grew around the state as people manufactured goods and shipped them across the country to be sold.

By the turn of the century, more and more Iowans left rural areas to find jobs in cities. In 1900, Iowa boasted more than 14,000 manufacturing businesses statewide. In these factories, workers made everything from buttons and butter to meat products and overalls. Factory work was hard and working conditions were often very poor, leading to many work-related accidents and deaths. Workers formed unions and demanded better wages and working conditions.

Progress and unemployment

Inventions and other technological advances often put people out of one line of work, and into another. With the introduction and growing popularity of the automobile, blacksmiths and carriage makers soon had to find other ways to earn their keep. Often, they converted their shops into garages and learned how to fix cars and motorized farm equipment.

Everett Ludley, who grew up in northeastern Iowa, remembers how the automobile changed the businesses district in Manchester, Iowa.

"Hennesey's Livery Stable was converted to a car agency," he wrote in 1989. "Billie Burk's Blacksmith Shop became a machine shop. In both, the smell of horse manure was replaced by the smell of oil and grease."

SHSI (Iowa City)

New inventions meant new jobs. The car drove blacksmiths, like E. Bennet, whose Jasper County shop is pictured above, out of business when it replaced horses as primary mode of transportation.

New technologies also created new jobs. Frederick Maytag made washing machines in Newton beginning in 1909. As Maytag perfected the machines, the demand for the product increased, and more and more people found jobs in the Maytag factory.

Industries have continued to grow throughout the state's history. From coal mining and meat packing to insurance and publishing, Iowans have worked in a variety of manufacturing and service positions and have marketed Iowa products throughout the world.

In 1994, 1,508,000 Iowans were employed in the state. That's enough people to fill the seats in Des Moines' Sec Taylor Stadium ten times! Of that number, 94,000 were young people between the ages of 16 and 19.

Young people under age 16, who are not included in official labor statistics, also work hard. Like kids in the early part of Iowa's history, they do chores at home, hold part-time jobs such as delivering newspapers and baby-sitting, and participate in other wage-earning activities. ▲

by Bridgett M. Williams

Working the environment

Making a living sometimes means making difficult choices.

Many of Iowa's best-known industries are extractive. An extractive industry takes things out of the ground or water that cannot be replaced.

Fur trading is one of Iowa's oldest extractive industries. Native Americans hunted deer and trapped beaver to trade with other groups. As European Americans increased the demand for furs in trade, overhunting eventually had a devastating effect on wildlife.

The lumber industry also changed Iowa's landscape. When Isaac Kramer moved to Linn County from Pennsylvania in 1838, linn trees grew everywhere. Soon, however, people cut and sold timber to build homes, furniture, fences, and barns, without replanting. By the time Isaac was an old man, the groves of his childhood were history.

Iowa's coal mines boomed in the 19th and early 20th century. Miners either tunneled to remove coal or "churned the earth," burning good soil underneath and leaving poor soil on top where nothing would grow. When coal companies quit because there was little coal left to mine, and better quality coal could be found elsewhere, miners had to find other work.

Farming can be considered an extractive industry. Crops take nutrients out of the soil and farmers use chemical fertilizers to restore them.

Movement and markets

Even the way we connect buyers and sellers changes the environment. In 1846, for example, there were few roads. Native American traders used rivers and footpaths to reach customers. Canoe and foot travel were easy on the environment.

European-American settlers, however, wanted to go where rivers didn't. They built roads to transport goods. Herds of cattle and wagons packed down the earth. The dust, smell, and noise drove away wild animals. To widen roads, people sometimes cut down trees. Without tree roots to hold it, soil eroded.

SHSI (Iowa City)

Beaver furs were once made into hats, like the one pictured here.

By the 1870s, railroads crisscrossed Iowa, creating new jobs and connecting farms and factories across the nation. Engines burned smoky coal, polluting the air. Sparks started prairie fires. Railroads also promoted expansion of agriculture; because farmers could move more grain to Chicago easily, they farmed more land.

Today, trucks and cars speed down Interstate 80 and 35, moving workers and what they produce around Iowa and the nation. How do highways and automobiles transform our environment today? ▲

by Bridgett M. William

Kids at work

Iowa's kids have held all types of jobs, from chores at home to working on farms, in factories, and in underground mines. Their wages often helped support their families.

Library of Congress

Boys as young as nine once worked alongside grown men in Iowa's mines.

Most kids in the past, like now, helped out around their homes and learned by working closely with their parents. Their jobs — whether picking berries for jelly, helping set fence posts, or watching younger siblings — made their homes better places to live. Everything a kid made, planted, fed, or fixed was one less thing parents had to buy or do.

Rural families sometimes hired out kids to neighbors who needed laborers. Only older boys usually inherited land or money from parents, so other children needed to make their own way in the world.

Hired girls cooked, cleaned, and took care of children. They also emptied chamber pots, did laundry, tended gardens, and canned fruits and vegetables. Girls received little pay for all this work — about $1.50 a week at the turn of the century.

Although girls gave most of their money to their parents, they sometimes kept a few dollars for themselves. Earning money made them feel independent.

Hired boys (also known as "plowboys") also received low wages. Boys chopped wood, hauled water, sorted seed, and

took care of livestock. They sometimes worked beside their employer, planting, plowing, and hoeing. At haying time, they would pitch hay until every muscle ached. Still, they hoped to save enough money to buy their own farm someday.

Why work?

Some boys and girls worked to put themselves through school. Frank Wilson, a 12-year-old who lived near Sioux City, hated farming. He wanted to go to high school instead. He arranged to work as a hired hand for a town family so he wouldn't have to ride his bicycle 20 miles a day to school. To pay for books, he took an extra job at a boarding house. He made beds every morning and waited tables every evening. Frank even found time to write a high school news column for the *Sioux City Journal*.

Other children, however, were not as lucky as Frank. They worked to earn money so their families could survive. Odessa Booker, the daughter of a coal miner in Buxton, Iowa, peddled fresh vegetables around her town for a quarter a basket. Odessa's brothers started working around the mines when they were ten years old. By the age of 16, they worked underground with their father. All the Booker children gave their money to their parents. Because they started work so early in life, they didn't graduate from high school.

Farm to factory

City children also worked. Some kids had jobs that did not pay wages. Many kids walked along railroad tracks and picked up coal for the family fireplace. Others sorted through garbage piles looking for stuff to fix up or sell.

Other jobs paid cash. Boys as young as seven years old could sell papers on street corners. Young girls might sell candy or magazines. Older children worked as delivery boys, clerks, cigar rollers, and **soda jerks**.

Factory work, although dangerous, employed thousands of Iowa kids in the early 20th century. Children routinely lost limbs and fingers to the whirring machinery. The 1902 Factory Act prohibited all children under the age of 16 from cleaning machines in motion, but allowed most kids to go on working. By 1915, a stricter set of laws made it illegal for most kids to skip school in order to work. Safety conditions were not much improved, but younger children were barred from factory work.

Hired boys and girls often worked for other families and helped with daily chores. This girl washes dishes, 1910.

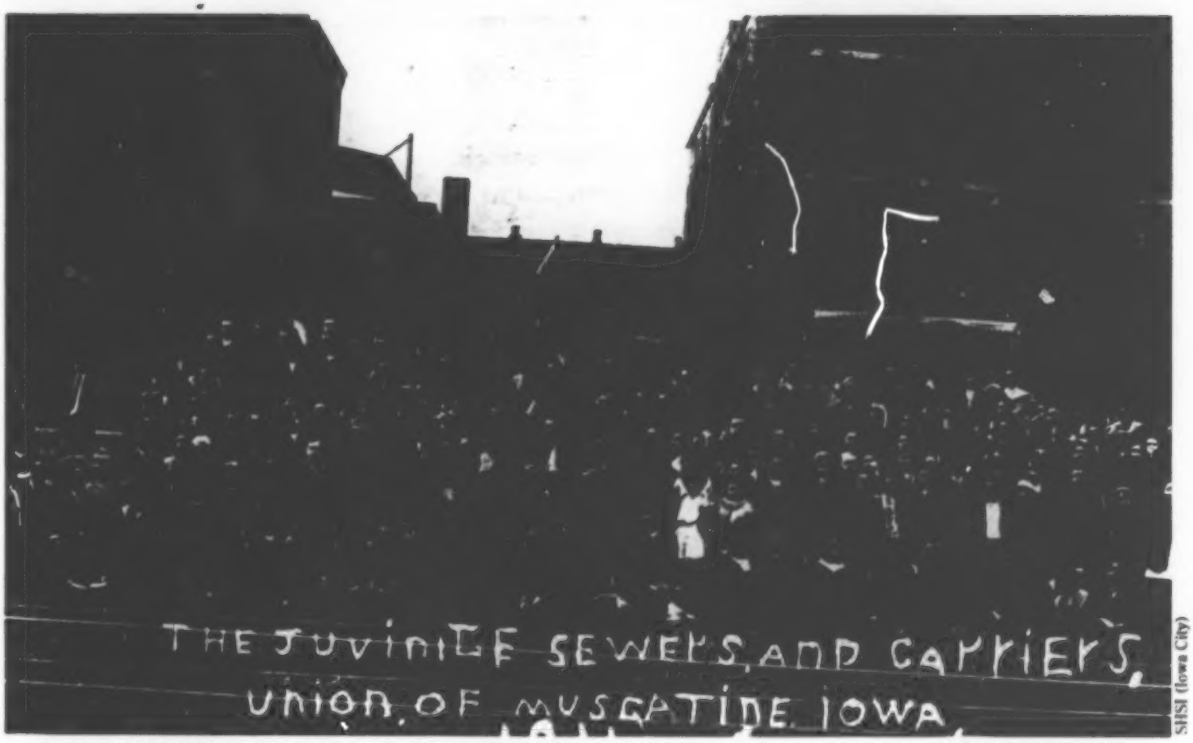
Today, children work in a variety of jobs. Some work as babysitters, others mow lawns and work in fast-food restaurants. Most kids help with household chores. Their labor contributes to Iowa's economy, just as it has in the state's past. ▲

soda jerk — clerk at a soda fountain

by Diane Nelson

Organizing labor

Workers in Iowa history have joined forces and demanded better working conditions and wages.



SHSI (Iowa City)

In the early 1900s, kid laborers in Muscatine formed a union of their own. Some of the members are pictured above.

Imagine that you and your family work for one of the 43 button factories in Muscatine, Iowa in 1911. If you are a boy, you might spend your days in a damp room pulling shells out of a tank of stinky water. Any cuts on your hands or arms are likely to become infected by germs in the water. You take the shells to a machine that cuts out small circles.

If you are a girl, you might use a machine to polish the circles or cut holes in them to make buttons. The air is dusty from all the shell dust and it's hard to breathe. If your machine clogs, you have to clean it without turning it off; you may get cut. When you return home at night you sew buttons onto cards. Your pay is based on how many shell circles or buttons you make or how many cards you fill. You can't watch the boss count what you've done

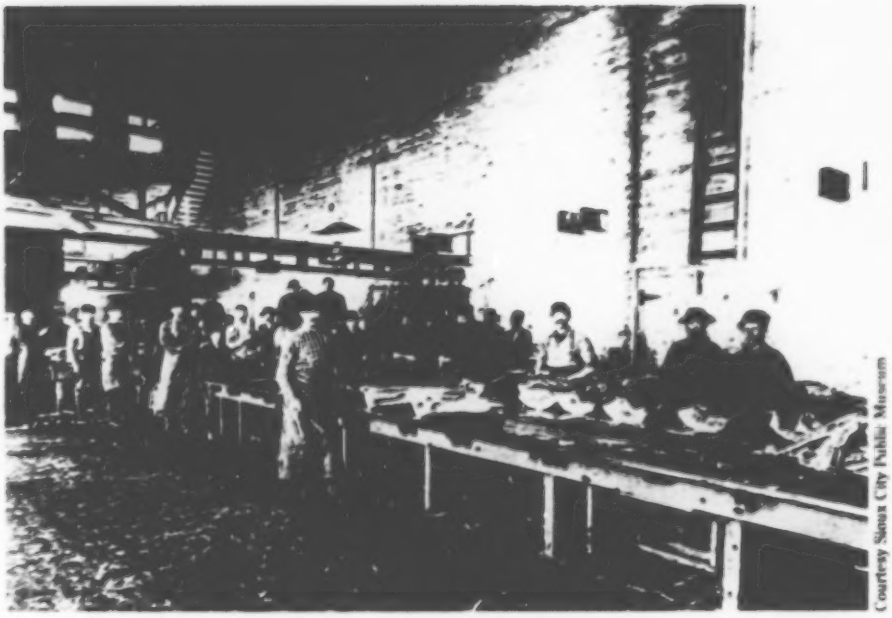
and you suspect you're being cheated. You'd like to complain, but you're afraid you'll be fired and your family really needs the few dollars you earn. What do you do?

You might join the nearly 700 children—including some under the legal working age of 14 years—in the Juvenile Button Sewers' and Carriers' Union.

A union is like a club. Members agree to help each other try to improve the place where they work by sharing their ideas and concerns with their employer.

Printers formed the first trade union at Dubuque in 1855. Their kind of trade union was very exclusive; you couldn't join unless you were a skilled tradesman.

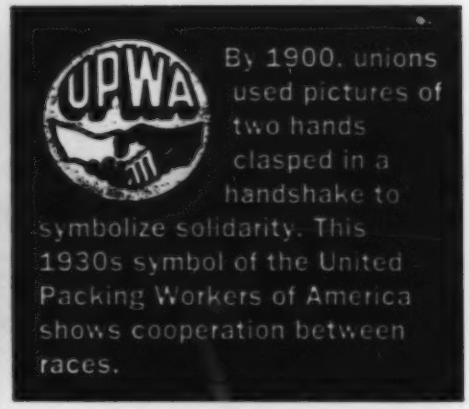
Des Moines miners joined the Knights of Labor in 1878. This national secret organization welcomed all workers regardless of their skill level, nationality, race, or gender. They encouraged the use of arbitration (using an outsider to make a decision after listening to both sides) instead of strikes (refusing to work).



Courtesy Sioux City Public Museum

SHSI (Iowa City)

ABOVE: Until labor laws cracked down on working conditions, Iowa workers had to endure dirty and dangerous work sites. Does this Sioux City meat packing house look safe and clean to you? LEFT: These Muscatine workers are on strike, 1950s.



By 1900, unions used pictures of two hands clasped in a handshake to symbolize solidarity. This 1930s symbol of the United Packing Workers of America shows cooperation between races.

Company owners seldom wanted to listen to workers' ideas. Sometimes they fired union organizers or temporarily closed their plants and then hired replacement workers (sometimes called scabs) to do the union members' jobs. In 1937, the U.S. Supreme Court said that workers have the right to organize themselves into unions as long as they follow certain rules.

Bruce Nolan worked in a Sioux City packing house in the 1930s. He and his friends learned about unions by reading the newspaper. They used direct action to get union recognition. "Thirty-four of us stopped that plant of 1400 workers. We had an agreement that after ten minutes we'd go back to work. We had 34 work stoppages until we was able to get the company to agree to sit down and talk to us."

A Quad Cities worker who joined a union in 1940 focused on improving working conditions. "Things weren't clean. Lighting was bad. There was no heat. It was terrible working there. We got the union in and the first thing we did was clean the shop up."

Many unions built meeting places where members' families could go to learn or be entertained. They shared stories about their jobs with politicians and encouraged them to pass laws to give workers cleaner and safer working conditions, better pay, more benefits, and fair treatment.

"(We) took the kids out of shops," says a Waterloo union member. "Without the labor movement negotiating for better wages and working conditions two-thirds of the people wouldn't have all the conveniences they've got now. The American people are much healthier now than when I was a kid."

Union membership in Iowa peaked in the 1950s. About half as many eligible workers join today, partly because companies have moved many traditional union jobs elsewhere. But unions are still needed. Workers who don't have a signed contract with their employer can be fired with or without a reason. Job-related injuries are still possible.

"All workers have the right to be treated with dignity both on and off the job." Mark Smith of the Iowa Federation of Labor told *The Goldfinch*. "Dignity comes from earning enough to provide for your family. It also comes from having some input in the decisions that are made about your working situation. Workers should have the right to ask about conditions that seem unfair, without worrying about losing their jobs."

Jennie Shuck remembers being cold and hungry when her father's Sioux City packing house was on strike. Even so, her advice to workers is, "Get involved, because in numbers there is strength. If you're trying to fight a battle by yourself, it's almost impossible."

The kids in the Muscatine Juvenile Button Sewers' and Carriers' Union would agree. ▲

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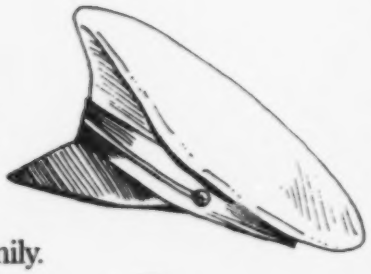
Hard at work

Identify the work-related words and phrases to the right. Then arrange the circled letters in the space at the bottom of the page to spell a holiday that honors workers. Answers on page 30.



1. An organization that helps workers.

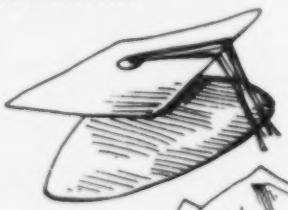
__ __ __ ◯ __

2. A girl who goes to work for another family.

__ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ ◯

3. Stop work to protest poor working conditions.

__ __ ◯ __ __ __



4. Money earned from work

__ ◯ __ __ __

5. A place where work is done.

__ ◯ __ __ __ __ ◯

6. Name for type of work where workers are paid based on the number of items they produce.

__ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __

7. Laws that protect young workers.

__ __ __ __ ◯ __ __ ◯ __ __

__ __ __ __

A holiday that honors workers.

◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯

Dear Diary . . .

By the time he was 17 years old Alfred J. Runkle had worked as a tailor and served in the U.S. Army during the Civil War.

Alfred was born in Pennsylvania in 1846 and moved to Lisbon, Iowa, when he was nine. His father, Thomas, worked as a tailor, probably out of his home, and taught his son the trade. Alfred and his younger sister, Rebecca, had some schooling.

After he was discharged from the army at the end of the war in 1865, Alfred worked as a clerk in dry goods stores in Cedar Rapids, Chicago, and Iowa City. He usually lived in boarding houses, but in Cedar Rapids he lived above the store.

He documented his clerking days in the diary pictured above. He wrote about store business, how much he missed his family, and when he sent or received letters.

From his diary, we know what Alfred did on the job, the hours he worked, and that he worked holidays. We also know that Alfred was often bored with his work, and hoped to find a position where he could be more independent.

SHSI (Iowa City)

Alfred J. Runkle carried this diary with him from jobs in Lisbon, Iowa, to Cedar Rapids, Chicago, and Iowa City.

Other historical documents tell us that Alfred was to get his wish. After clerking in Iowa City, he opened his own dry goods business in Missouri in 1881 and in Cedar Rapids in 1889. Alfred married, had two children, and after he retired from the dry goods trade, worked as a life insurance agent.

Today, Alfred's 1867 diary reveals what life was like for a 21-year-old worker in Iowa's early years.

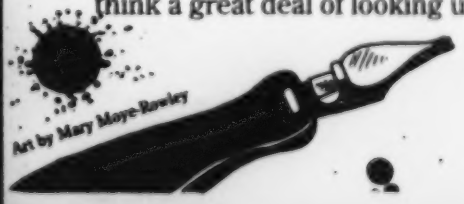
— Amy Ruth

Saturday January 25, 1867
Still busy taking stock today and worked this eve until 12 P.M. Bus. [business] **dull**. I find a very tedious job taking stock.

Friday February 8, 1867
Bus. dull. We had nothing to do. It made all hands feel blue. I still think a great deal of looking up some new place so as to be more independent.

Friday March 8, 1867
Robinson informed us of a raise in board this eve to $4.00 to take effect next week. I don't like the raise at all and in all probability will leave or change my boarding place.

Monday April 15, 1867
This morning about 2 o'clock a fire broke out in the basement story of Ely's Block right under the store. Dr. Ebi was the first to raise the alarm. I ran downstairs but found I could do nothing to save any goods. I ran back upstairs and got some of the clothes in my trunk and tumbled down the stairs as best I could. Max [a fellow clerk] and I took our things to the Empire House [hotel]. Went to bed



Art by Mary Moyc-Rowley

dull— slow

around 4 a.m. Could not sleep. Sent a telegram. Loafed around the hotel.

Friday April 19, 1867
Maxwell, self were called into the mayor's office. I was quizzed by 5 of the insurance agents.

When the store burned down, Alfred was unemployed for some time. He also lost his home and had to live in the hotel for a little while. In June, he and a fellow clerk, Smith, moved to Chicago and found jobs.

Monday June 3, 1867
I [came] in at work this morn in Mandel Bros. store. I got woolen and clothes dept. A pretty big job. I got along well enough for the first day.

Tuesday June 4, 1867
I got along much as usual today. But find a vastly different style of bus. and customers here than in CR [Cedar Rapids].

Saturday June 8, 1867
Business much as before. Did not get out of the store till 10 1/2 P.M. I found my envelope of wages to contain $12 for the 1st weeks work.

Tuesday August 13, 1867
I was in Bus. as usual today. I sent $80.00 home by express this morning.

Sometime in September or October, Alfred moved back to Iowa. He spent some time in Lisbon, then moved to Iowa City and found a clerking job there, beginning work on October 8.

Wednesday October 9, 1867
Work busy as usual all day. I send shawl and Balmoral skirt to sister. We have a pretty nice stock of goods.

Thursday October 17, 1867
Business much as usual. Nothing to brag of. I trimmed the notion window today.

Monday November 11, 1867
Bus. as usual today. No special news. I done a pretty good days work. $72.67 [in sales].

Thursday November 28, 1867
This was Thanksgiving day. But I spent it at store all day.

Wednesday December 25, 1867
We went in store till about 2 P.M. then went to Branding House. We had a splendid turkey roast. I carved turkey.

Alfred's Accounts

A neighborhood at work

Between the early 1900s and the 1960s, a neighborhood located northwest of downtown Des Moines was home to much of the city's African-American population.

The neighborhood, called Center Street after the area's main street, grew during World War I when the Colored Officers Training Camp opened at Fort Des Moines to train African-American officers. After the war, many officers and their families stayed in Des Moines and settled near Center Street. During this time, the coal mines in the southwest Iowa town of Buxton closed and much of that community's black population also settled in the neighborhood.

The black population faced discrimination in housing, education, and business. The neighborhood was one of the few areas where African Americans could live and work peacefully. Center Street was a self-sufficient place that met the social, financial, educational, and residential needs of the black population. African Americans opened their own businesses and provided goods and services to one another during a time when white-owned businesses did not want them as customers.

"Some of the buildings didn't stand so straight and tall, but they had a lot of personality in them," said Gaynelle Narcisse, a Des Moines resident who is writing a book about Center Street.

The Center Street neighborhood flourished in the 1940s and 1950s. The area's business district boasted barber shops, beauty parlors, restaurants, night clubs, grocery stores, pharmacies, lawyers' offices, funeral homes, pool halls, hotels, laundries, service stations, a movie theatre, photography studio, and print shop. Many neighborhood businesses attracted customers by advertising in *The Iowa Bystander*, the city's black newspaper.

Some residents operated businesses out of their homes or hired themselves out to provide services that ranged from delivery to catering.

"The money stayed in the community and it was able to thrive," Narcisse told *The Goldfinch*. "The residents patronized the businesses there and the neighborhood survived."

In the early 1960s, much of the neighborhood was torn down to make room for a freeway. Many Center Street residents lost their homes. Businesses closed or moved to new locations and the city lost a vibrant business district.

— Amy Ruth

VISIT THE EXHIBIT!

The Center Street neighborhood is the subject of a museum display at the Historical Building in Des Moines until 1997. For more information call 515-281-6412.

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Who worked where?

Match the businesses described below with their locations on the map of the Center Street neighborhood. Answers on page 30.

❶ Three service stations operated near 12th Street and Keosauqua Way.

❷ The Community Pharmacy, one of Iowa's first black-owned pharmacies, was on the southwest corner of 12th and Center Streets.

❸ The Community Luncheonette was next door to the Community Pharmacy.

❹ Pauline Humphrey operated her Crescent School of Beauty at 1407 Center Street, between 14th and 15th Streets.

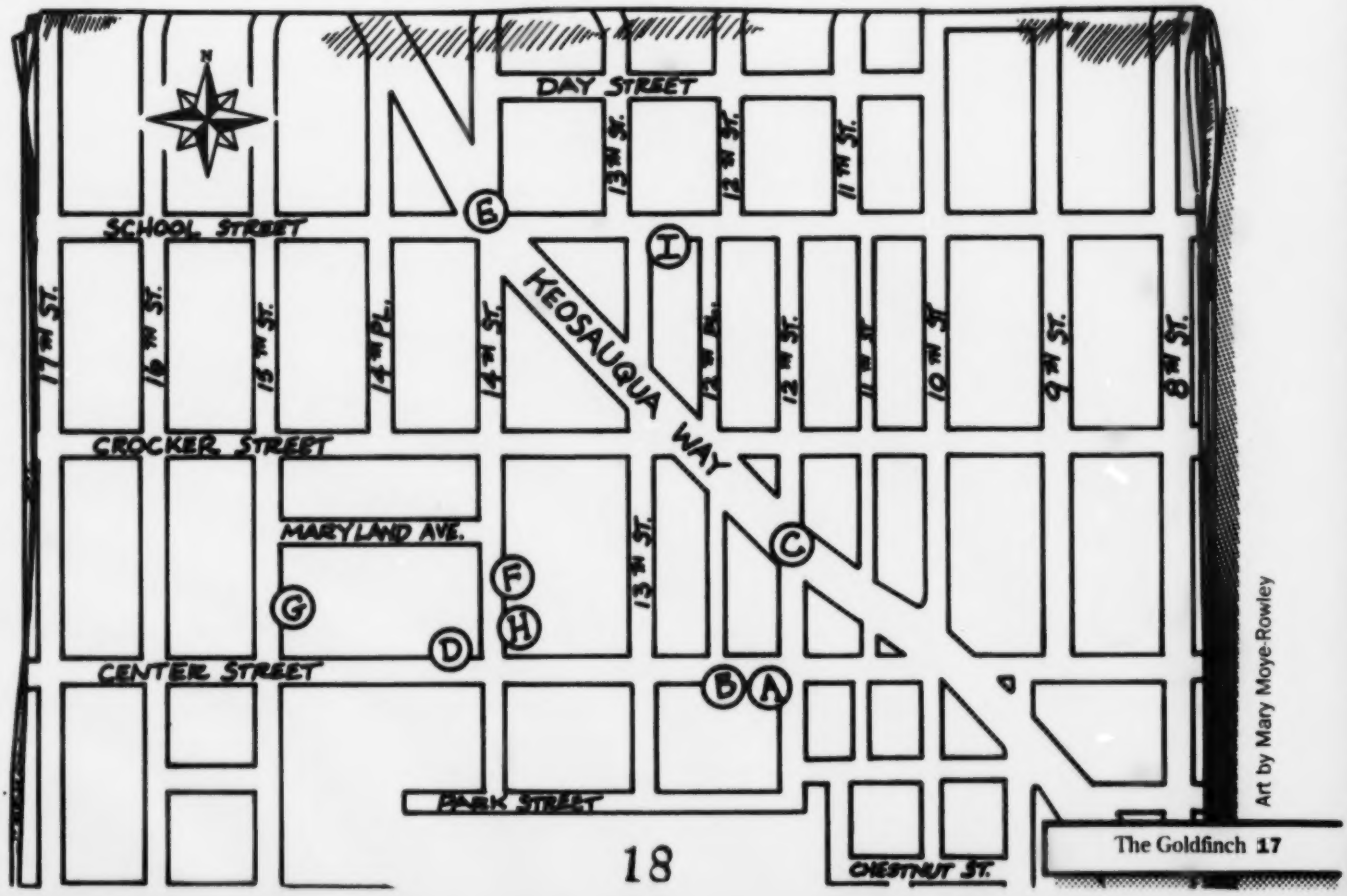
❺ Bernice Richmond was a caterer. She lived at 1046 14th Street, north of Crocker Street.

❻ Robert E. Patten operated his print shop on the east side of 14th Street between Center and Crocker Streets.

❼ Ayers Curtain Laundry was on the south side of School Street, between 12th and 13th Streets.

❽ Tug Wilson ran Wilson Funeral Home on 14th Street, near the corner of Center and 14th Streets. It later became Estes & Son Funeral Home.

❾ Ray Lucas offered light hauling from his location on 15th Street, between Center and Crocker Streets.



Art by Mary Moye-Rowley

by Linzee Kull McCray

Women at work

You may have heard the saying, "A woman's work is never done." If a woman enjoys her work, that might not be a bad thing. But in Iowa's past, women's work was mostly time-consuming, back-breaking domestic labor.

SHSI (Iowa City)

These women are hat makers, around the turn of the century.

Today, both women and men may choose to work inside or outside the home. This choice wasn't always available to women in Iowa and throughout the United States.

In the past, most women spent their days caring for children, raising vegetables and animals, and cooking and canning. They made clothes for their families, spinning wool, weaving it into cloth, sewing it into clothes, and then washing, ironing, and mending those clothes. They swept and scrubbed their homes from top to bottom, and then started all over again the next day.

Women who wove their own cloth at home supported the carding mill industry through the late 1800s. Women sent their raw sheep wool or flax to a carding mill where the fibres were processed into smooth, usable yarn.

Beginning in the 1860s, more Iowa women moved into the working world outside of their homes. The most popular jobs for women were those which used the domestic skills society considered appropriate.

By 1870, a total of 23,126 women in Iowa were employed outside the home. In 1880, about half of all women working outside the home were "hired girls." These workers labored in other people's homes, running their households. Margaret Bayer, who worked for a farmer near Iowa City, cleaned house, worked in the fields, and picked and sold strawberries in town.

Another common occupation for women was teaching school. Garment and textile factories also employed women workers.

Few women were able to own their own businesses. Banks considered women to be bad business risks and were reluctant to loan them money to open shops and start companies. One of the few acceptable businesses for a woman to own was a millinery (hat-making) business.

It was also extremely hard for women of color to go into business. Many people wouldn't rent business property to

African Americans and other minorities. Women of color faced gender and racial discrimination in the workplace.

By 1900, 106,883 women in Iowa worked outside the home. Many young women, like 14-year-old Johanna Bushman, found work in Iowa's factories. Johanna rolled cigars in Dubuque. Her wages helped support her family.

In the state's button factories, jobs were assigned according to gender. Men cut buttons from clam shells, and women ran machinery that drilled the holes, pressed patterns, and polished the buttons.

Women nearly always received less money for their work than did men. Teaching was primarily a male profession until men realized they could make more money in factories, and so left the classrooms to women. A 1913 survey showed that most Iowa women working in industry earned less than ten dollars a week, while only ten percent of men in industry earned that little.

Most women were expected to quit their jobs once they married so that they could stay home and raise their children.

Some women continued to earn money, even while at home. Women took in laundry, rented rooms to travelers, and sold eggs, garden produce, and homemade jams to increase the family income.

Some women did step out of the roles that society saw as appropriate and into the world of work traditionally reserved for men. Rhoda A. Shelton, a college-educated woman from Mt. Pleasant, worked as a bookkeeper at the Iowa Hospital for the Insane in 1866. The nation's first female lawyer, Arabella Mansfield, also of Mt. Pleasant, passed the **bar exam** in 1869 when she was 23.

SHSI (Iowa City)

These workers sort buttons in an Iowa factory at the turn of the century.

Photo courtesy Mason City Public Library

Bus line owner, Helen Schultz, 1924.

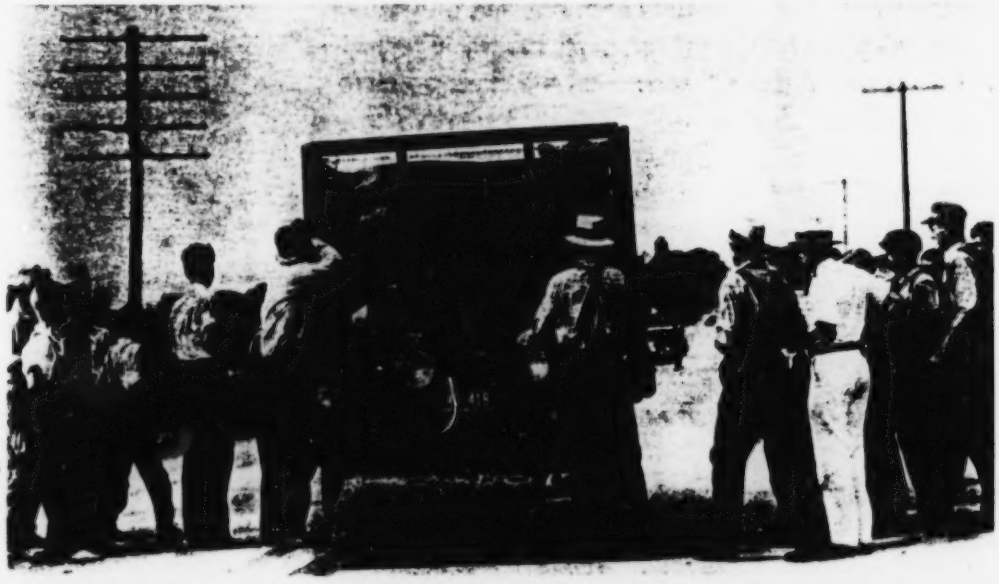
Helen Schultz started the Red Ball Transportation Company in 1922, which provided the first bus service between Mason City, Charles City, and Chicago. Schultz, who became known as "Iowa's Bus Queen," struggled with weather, unpaved roads, and flat tires.

People often have questioned the ability of women to perform well in their chosen professions. But thanks to Iowa's early female pioneers, Iowa women have more choices today about the kind of work they do. ▲

bar exam — test to become a lawyer

by Todd Norden

Tough times: When jobs were hard to find



SHSI (Iowa City)

Low prices for farm goods provoked strikes and disruptions during the Great Depression. Above, dissatisfied farmers block a cattle truck by placing a hay bale in its path.

In the 1930s, the Park family of Dubuque faced hard times. Between 1931 and 1936, Claud Park found only odd jobs. Claud's family — wife Martha and their children, Claud Jr., Mary, and Dorothy — struggled to survive on Claud's meager wages and the vegetables Martha grew on a patch of land donated by the city.

In bad winter weather, the children stayed home from school because they did not have enough winter clothing to keep warm.

Many other Iowans also experienced economic hard times during the Great Depression of the 1930s.

During World War I (1914-1918), farmers raised a **surplus** of food to support American soldiers and European families. Banks loaned money to help farmers produce more goods.

When peace came to Europe in 1918, Europeans stopped depending on Iowa farmers for extra food. In the 1920s, farmers continued to produce more goods to pay back their loans. Because of overproduction, farmers were paid less for their crops. Farmers could not pay back their loans. Banks and businesses closed down or laid off workers.

21

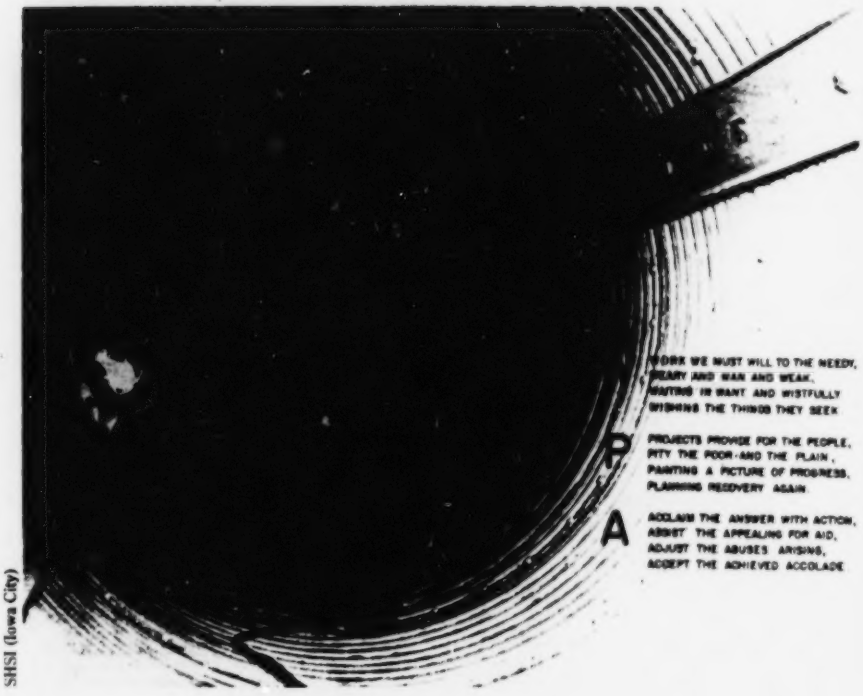
surplus —more than what is needed

Farmers made tough decisions in the 1930s. Farm owners faced bankruptcy. Tenants often did not earn enough money to pay rent. For some, that meant packing up belongings and moving to a new town, city, or state to start over.

In 1930, the Crumbaugh family sold their 114-acre farm and moved into the city limits of Dubuque, hoping to find jobs. Mr. Crumbaugh never found full-time work during the Great Depression. Some of his 10 children took jobs cleaning houses, as farm hands, or in factories to help support the family.

Others families chose to farm without any promise of earning money. Farmers tried to grow what would sell for the best price.

In the summer of 1932, farm woman Clara Ackerman wrote in her diary, "What shall we do, not raise anything? We are still getting nine cents for eggs and thirteen to fifteen cents for cream which isn't spent for groceries except sugar, coffee, and an *occasional* head of lettuce. Are we tired of our own products? Yes, but we are


WORK WE MUST WILL TO THE NEEDY,
PROJECTS PROVIDE FOR THE PEOPLE,
PITY THE POOR AND THE PLAIN,
PAINTING A PICTURE OF PROGRESS,
PLANNING RECOVERY AGAIN
ACCLAIM THE ANSWER WITH ACTION,
ASSIST THE APPEALING FOR AID,
ADJUST THE ABUSES ARISING,
ACCEPT THE ACHIEVED ACCOLADE
SHSI (Iowa City)

SHSI (Iowa City)

The Works Progress Administration (WPA) kept Americans working in the 1930s. ABOVE: Webster City WPA workers repair a sewer, 1939. The poem describes the WPA philosophy. LEFT: WPA workers train to be domestic workers, Des Moines, 1938.

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willing to keep on in order to buy the necessities we must have."

One out of every four American workers were unemployed during the Great Depression. In Dubuque, the city's **sash** and door mills laid off half their workers between 1930 and 1935. Without jobs, many Iowans were too poor to buy basic necessities.

Times got a little easier when the federal government stepped in. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt began the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), and the Civil Works Administration (CWA) to give Americans jobs and wages.

Young people also struggled through the Great Depression. Some, like the Crumbaugh children, quit school to support their families. In 1935, President Roosevelt created the National Youth Administration (NYA) to provide work for high school and college students that allowed them to stay in school.

Many Iowa youth joined the NYA. Students prepared classroom exhibits and graded papers. Young people helped to improve roads, install street signs, plant trees, and build bridges. Young women sewed, served school lunches, and worked in libraries and museums. African-American youths built an ice skating rink in Good Park in Des Moines.

The NYA program gave young Iowans work experience that prepared them for jobs following the Great Depression. They also interacted with children from different backgrounds.

In the 1980s, hard times appeared again for Iowans. Farmers' crop prices were high through the 1970s and then fell suddenly. Farmers couldn't pay back loans and many lost their farms. Farmers left their farms to look for jobs in cities. In 1982, there were around 115,000 farms in Iowa. Four years later, that number shrunk to 109,000. With fewer jobs in Iowa's farms and cities, families worked hard against tough odds to support themselves. They learned to beat hard times once again. ▲

SHSI (Iowa City)

WPA workers serve hot lunches in a Mason City nursery school, 1940.

sash — window frame

Make a time card

by Todd Norden

Imagine it is 1938. As a worker in Iowa, you make the minimum wage of 40 cents an hour. You record your hours on a time card similar to the one in this activity.

Today some workers still use time cards to clock in and out of their jobs.

This time card will help you keep track of your hours. Record how much time you spend on chores, a part-time job, and other money making activities.

At the end of the week, add up your hours. Multiply your total hours by your hourly wage (40 cents). This sum equals how much money you would have made during one week in 1938.

Name of Employee: _____

MONDAY	Start Time:		Job Description:
	Finish:		
	Total Hours:		
TUESDAY	Start Time:		Job Description:
	Finish:		
	Total Hours:		
WEDNESDAY	Start Time:		Job Description:
	Finish:		
	Total Hours:		
THURSDAY	Start Time:		Job Description:
	Finish:		
	Total Hours:		
FRIDAY	Start Time:		Job Description:
	Finish:		
	Total Hours:		
SATURDAY	Start Time:		Job Description:
	Finish:		
	Total Hours:		
SUNDAY	Start Time:		Job Description:
	Finish:		
	Total Hours:		

Total hours worked this week: _____

Hours X Hourly Wage of 40¢: _____

Art by Mary Moye-Rowley

by Millie K. Frese

History makers

Last year, fifth-graders from Elvira Elementary School in Clinton interviewed older members of the community and asked what work they did as kids. They collected the memories in a classroom publication they called "Stroll Down Memory Lane." Then they shared their stories with *The Goldfinch*. Read on to find out how jobs, chores, and attitudes about work have changed.

"Every morning I make my bed, make my own breakfast, and get ready for school," Anna Grimm, 11, told *The Goldfinch*. She feeds the dogs and cats, sets the table for meals, dusts, and cleans her room, too.

"I do dishes whenever my parents make me," she said of her least favorite chore.

One job she particularly enjoys is raking leaves in the fall. "It's fun to make a big pile of leaves and jump in!"

Anna interviewed her grandmother, Joanne Grimm, 69, about her childhood jobs.

"When I was 14, I babysat, did a lady's dishes and cleaned her house after school," Grimm said. "When I was 15, I quit my other jobs and started working in the dime store." ▲

Rebecca Guilliams, 12, keeps her room clean and helps her brothers and sisters clean house and do the laundry. She sometimes babysits.

"I like watching kids and babysitting," Rebecca told *The Goldfinch*. As for the rest of her chores: "I don't like any of them that much, but they have to be done! My mom always tells me she had to do more work when she was little. We don't have to do that much."

Rebecca interviewed her grandmother Alice Issen, 64, who started working when she was nine. "I cleaned an eight-room house and babysat three kids," Issen said. "I did that for three years. Then I found another house where I could wash clothes, do dishes, iron, and dust for a lady." ▲

Jeremy Corr's least favorite chore is drying dishes. "Washing is better than drying," Jeremy, 11, told *The Goldfinch*. But he'd rather be outside feeding the dogs, cats, and sheep. Shoveling snow, mowing the lawn, and shearing sheep are a few more of Jeremy's chores. In spring, he prepares pastures for the sheep. "The whole family goes out and burns grass the sheep won't eat so new grass will grow for them," he said.

Jeremy interviewed his grandmother, Virginia Norland, 69, who also grew up doing farm chores. "The family had to pick corn by hand," Norland said. "When we milked cows, we separated the cream from the milk. We gave the milk to the pigs and sold the cream." ▲

Photos courtesy of students

Anna Grimm **Rebecca Gulliams** **Jeremy Corr** **Lindsey Voss** **Tessa Rutledge** **Emily Randolph**

Lindsey Voss, 12, helps with the dishes (her least favorite chore), laundry, vacuuming (her favorite), and sweeps the kitchen floor.

"I do each about twice a week," Lindsey told *The Goldfinch*. "I don't like doing dishes because I don't like washing everyone's dirty plates," she explained.

Lindsey interviewed community member Bob Goodell, 71.

"When I was a kid growing up in Clinton I had a Sunday paper route," Goodell said. "On my way to deliver my Sunday papers the janitor came out of the courthouse and he asked me if I wanted to wind the clock. He took me up and showed me how to wind it and paid me 15 cents. I came and did it every Sunday." ▲

Dusting is Tessa Rutledge's favorite chore, because, she told *The Goldfinch*, "it's easy!" Tessa, 12, also helps vacuum and feeds rabbits, a goat, and chickens. She also does the dishes — washing, drying, and putting them away.

She thinks kids today have it easier than when her grandparents were young. "We don't have to work all day the way some of them did," she said.

Tessa interviewed her grandmother, Betty Miller, 72, who grew up in the 1930s.

"There were no jobs," said Miller. "We lived on a farm. But in town, jobs were not held by women. The only women who worked were divorced or widowed who had kids to raise. We even had men secretaries back then." ▲

Emily Randolph, 12, lives on a farm. She feeds her family's dogs, Maggie and Martha, two calves, horses, and her sister's sheep. Inside, Emily helps clean house and wash the dishes.

"I like being outside better than inside," Emily told *The Goldfinch*. Her favorite chore is bottlefeeding new-born calves.

Emily interviewed her grandfather, Lewis Randolph, 71, who grew up on a fruit farm near Princeton, Iowa in the 1930s.

"My father employed most of the local teenage girls, schoolteachers, and women to help harvest various types of berries as they were in season," Randolph said. "We picked half of the patch each day." ▲

Be a photo historian

SHSI (Iowa City)

These workers pause from their back-breaking jobs to pose for a photographer in Lucas, Iowa, around 1913.

To learn more about these workers and others who made their livings in similar places, study the photograph carefully, then answer the questions to the right.

1. Where are these workers and what are they doing?
2. What is smeared on the workers' clothes and faces?
3. Why do you think the boy (pictured in the middle) is here, instead of in school?
4. What is the man on the far right holding? What kind of work was done with this tool?
5. Do you think this work environment was safe for workers? Why or why not?
6. Would you like to do the kind of work pictured above? Why or why not?

Answers on page 30

A JOB FOR THE SUMMER

Millie K. Frese

In the summer of 1920, a young Iowa girl left home to work for a farm family. Will the experience be a good one?

Lena Richards was going on 13. She'd lived in town all her life, with her parents in the bungalow behind the creamery her father managed. She'd never been away from home before by herself. That's why Lena was so surprised when her mother came home with this news:

"Mrs. Graham gave birth to twins last week. She's looking to hire someone to help out for a spell."

Mama always thought Lena was missing out, not having any brothers or sisters around. Working for the Grahams would be a good experience, she reasoned. Mama called it an opportunity. Papa, after a bit of convincing, agreed.

So that's how Lena found herself in the front seat of Mr. Graham's truck early on the first Monday morning of summer vacation. She clutched her suitcase in her lap on the way to her very first job.

"The house sits behind that clump of pines," Mr. Graham said, turning up a bumpy dirt lane toward his place. "We raise a little of this, a little of that," he continued, cheerfully talking about corn, oats, wheat, milk cows, sheep, pigs, and —

Chickens! What a cackle they made scurrying out of the way when Mr. Graham pulled the truck into the yard.

A wiry old man with a white pointed beard opened Lena's door and reached for her suitcase.

"Pa, this is Lena," Mr. Graham said.

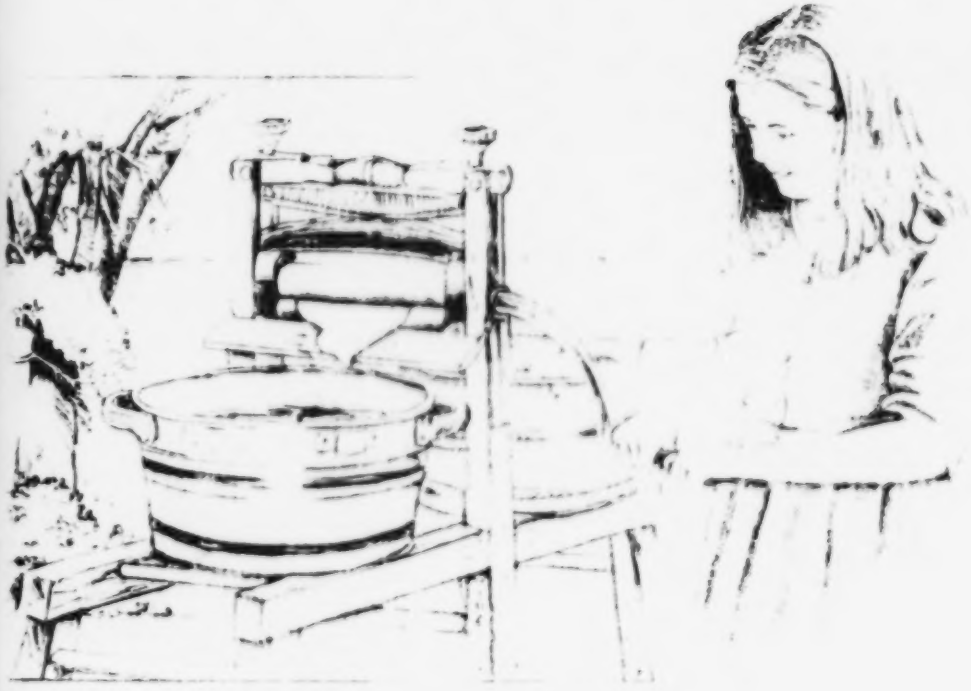
"She don't look like much of a farmhand to me," Old Mr. Graham snapped. "She'll have to earn her keep around here like the rest of us." Old Mr. Graham didn't mince words and she'd heard that he didn't waste money. Lena couldn't tell if he was smiling or not as he turned away.

"Don't mind Pa," Mr. Graham said as he led Lena indoors. "It's the roosters you gotta look out for around here!"

Lena didn't have a chance to ask what he meant. They were already in the kitchen and Mrs. Graham, relieved to see her new helper, had things for Lena to do.

"The wash water's hot," Mrs. Graham said, taking a steaming copper boiler off the stove. Lena followed

rt by Mary Moye Rowley



Mrs. Graham to the wringer washer and piles of dirty laundry on the back porch. She rolled up her sleeves and went to work.

Hot sudsy water splattered the front of Lena's dress as she washed and rinsed the laundry. The shirts. The pants. The dresses. The underclothes. The towels. The diapers. Her arms ached from cranking the washing machine and from lugging fresh kettles of hot water. They ached from stretching to clip the heavy, wet wash onto the clotheslines out by the vegetable garden. Sweat streaked her face. Damp auburn curls stuck uncomfortably to her forehead. It was almost lunch time when she finished.

Lena decided she didn't like Mondays on the farm much at all.

The men came in from cultivating corn; they watered the horses, then sat down to eat. What a feast! Lena helped serve a salad made with fresh greens, fried chicken, new potatoes and garden peas, cold milk, warm rhubarb pie, stacks of sliced homemade bread, and pitchers of cold milk.

Mr. Graham gave thanks for the meal, for the land that provided the food, and for the hands that prepared it. Then they ate until they could hold no more, with Lena refilling the food platters for the hungry workers. After the men were finished eating, it was Lena and Mrs. Graham's turn. They enjoyed a quick meal, then cleared the table and washed the dishes.

During lunch, the babies slept; when the dishes were done, Mrs. Graham fed one while Lena rocked the other on the shady front porch.

"We always rest awhile after lunch," Mrs. Graham explained. "Then it's time to gather eggs." She told Lena where to find the baskets, how to line them with handfuls of grass to cushion the eggs, and where to find the chicken feed.

Lena had never been inside a chicken coop before. She stepped cautiously through the door. A few hens remained on their nests until Lena shooed them away.

"Stubborn birds," she muttered. The eggs she found were warm and smooth to her touch. Some were white, others brown or creamy colored. Soon the basket was full.

Lena blinked hard as she stepped back out into the afternoon sun. In the moment it took her eyes to readjust, a big black-feathered rooster with a bright red comb collided, scratching and pecking, into the back of her legs. Lena screamed. The rooster crowed. The hens beat the air with their wings.

"Those roosters are mean as the dickens!" Old Mr. Graham hollered above the noise. He ran toward Lena, swatting the fierce bird with a broom. Lena fought back tears as she saw blood trickle down her leg where the rooster had gashed her calf. She was afraid to look into the basket of eggs.

"No harm done," Old Mr. Graham said, noticing a half dozen or so broken eggs oozing from the basket. He helped Lena to her feet and put his arm around her shoulders.

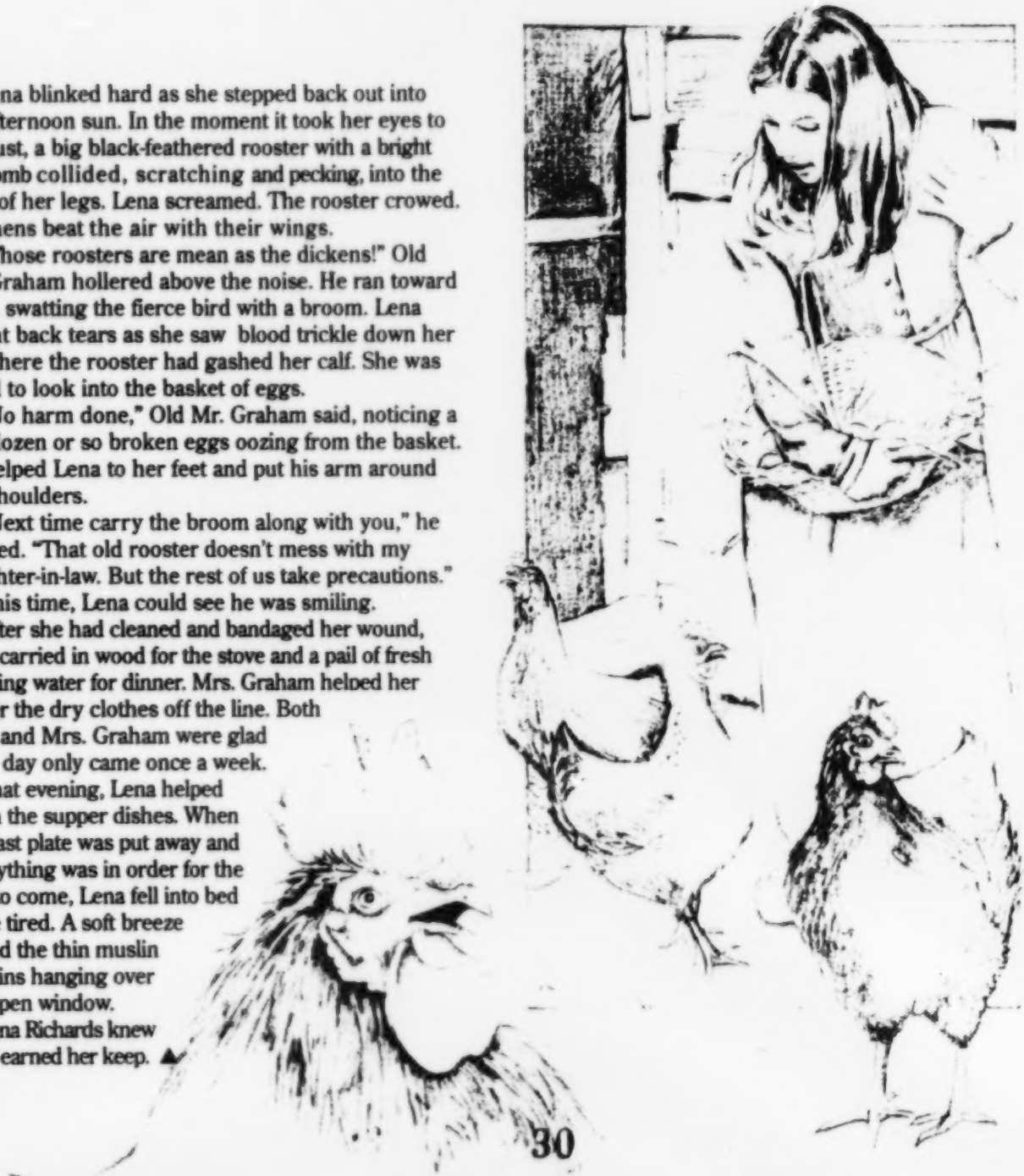
"Next time carry the broom along with you," he advised. "That old rooster doesn't mess with my daughter-in-law. But the rest of us take precautions."

This time, Lena could see he was smiling.

After she had cleaned and bandaged her wound, Lena carried in wood for the stove and a pail of fresh drinking water for dinner. Mrs. Graham helped her gather the dry clothes off the line. Both Lena and Mrs. Graham were glad wash day only came once a week.

That evening, Lena helped wash the supper dishes. When the last plate was put away and everything was in order for the day to come, Lena fell into bed bone tired. A soft breeze tickled the thin muslin curtains hanging over her open window.

Lena Richards knew she'd earned her keep. ▲



Answers

History Mystery (Page 3)

Workers used this equipment to float logs down river to lumber mills where the logs were turned into smooth boards.

Hard at Work Puzzle (Page 13)

1. Union
2. Hired girl
3. Strike
4. Wages
5. Factory
6. Piece work
7. Child labor laws

HOLIDAY THAT HONORS WORKERS: Labor Day

Who Works Where (Page 17)

1. C	4. D	7. I
2. A	5. E	8. H
3. B	6. F	9. G

Be a Photo Historian (Page 26)

1. These workers are coal miners in an underground coal mine.
2. Coal dust.
3. Children's wages often helped to support a family.
4. Workers used a pick to dig out the coal.
5. Mines sometimes caved in and crushed workers. The coal dust workers breathed often caused life-long lung diseaes.

The Goldfinch wants to know what you have discovered about Iowa's past. Has your class worked on special Iowa history projects? Are you helping to save something old? Have you found an old letter, diary, photograph, or arrowhead that tells something about the past?

If you answered yes to any question above, we want to hear from you! You and your story may appear in an upcoming issue of the magazine! Upcoming themes are: Iowa's Kid Heroes, Weather, Main Street, and Newspapers.

Contact Editor Amy Ruth at 402 Iowa Ave., Iowa City, Iowa 52240, 319 335 3930

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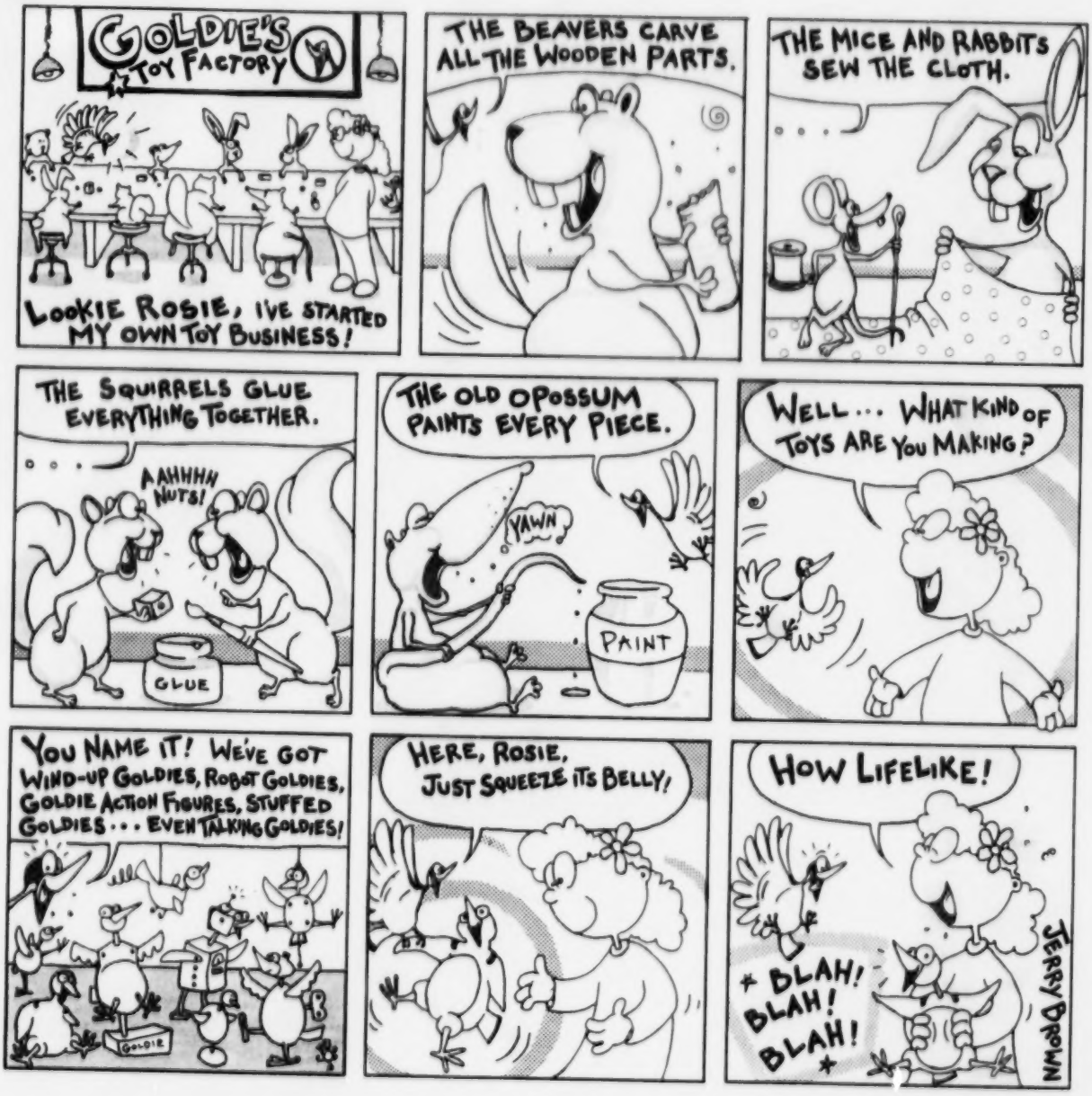
The Roost


GOLDIE'S TOY FACTORY
LOOKIE ROSIE, I'VE STARTED MY OWN TOY BUSINESS!
THE BEAVERS CARVE ALL THE WOODEN PARTS.
THE MICE AND RABBITS SEW THE CLOTH.
THE SQUIRRELS GLUE EVERYTHING TOGETHER.
AAHHHH NUTS!
GLUE
THE OLD OPOSSUM PAINTS EVERY PIECE.
YAWN
PAINT
WELL... WHAT KIND OF TOYS ARE YOU MAKING?
YOU NAME IT! WE'VE GOT WIND-UP GOLDIES, ROBOT GOLDIES, GOLDIE ACTION FIGURES, STUFFED GOLDIES... EVEN TALKING GOLDIES!
GOLDIE
HERE, ROSIE, JUST SQUEEZE ITS BELLY!
HOW LIFELIKE!
BLAH! BLAH! BLAH!
JERRY BROWN

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